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The Loves of Vandyck

J. W. Gilbart-Smith

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THE LOVES OF VANDYCK

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THE LOVES OF VANDYCK

A Tale of Genoa

BY

J. W. GILBART-SMITH

LONDON
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THE LOVES OF VANDYCK.

In the absence of reliable record, Tradition—the foster-sister of History—secures an enduring welcome as familiarizing us with those whose names are household words.

Than Vandyck there probably never existed a man who lived so prominently before the world of whom so little is authentically known. Of his English life few records remain; favoured though it was by Charles, and fêted by his court. Neither the distinguished appearance of the man, nor his insinuating manner, nor those habits of profuse prodigality which gained for him in Rome the sobriquet of *il*

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THE LOVES OF VANDYCK

Of mirth and music, lingered long
  On echoing wings of flight.
Ye heavens, that divinely bar
Yon solitudes of moon and star
  To aught save yearning sight,
How must ye grieve that view afar,
What nature makes 'tis man's to mar,
  However pure or bright!

III.

Within yon palace, gleaming gay
With many an artificial ray,
Whose open casements woo the air
With blandishments of light to bear
The lingering balm of summer there,
There is high festival to-night
For manhood brave and beauty bright

Here Soffonisba greets in state
All Genoa deems grand or great.
What tho' her gentle eyes are blind,
Her century of years are kind
That crown her sovereign still in mind.
As sympathetic e'en as sage,
Her heart embraced both youth and age;
Endeared to young and old the same,
Her wit, her wisdom, not her fame,
Ennobled an enduring name.
Thus Soffonisba's years sublime,
More mellowed than decayed by Time,
Breathed yet the fragrance of their prime
As autumn's rich aromas bring
To mind the memories of spring! *

* Soffonisba Anguisciola, Marchesa Lomellini, one of the few true artists her sex has ever produced, was then considerably over ninety years of age, and quite blind. Vandyck, who had painted her in Palermo in 1626, was accustomed to declare that he had learnt more of painting from the talk of a blind woman than from the study of the great masterpieces. The Marchioness, as celebrated for her salon as for her poems, her music, or her

Now reverencing rank and worth
  Pay tribute to her power;
Now youth with melody and mirth
  Awakes the witching hour,—
Congenial sounds since she that hears
Is young in heart as aged in years.
Here many a bard that well has sung
Forgets imagination 'mong
Delights of grove and grotto there,
And sweets of bloom and beauty,—fair
As ever Fancy bade him share.
Here for the mariner is blent
A ray more rich than that which lent
A beamy brilliance to the star
That wiled him homewards from afar.
The hero of a hundred fields
Finds here a foe that conquering yields,

paintings, was renowned for the versatility of her manners; and her receptions were attended by the celebrities of the day, including Rubens and Vandyck. Her finest paintings are preserved in the Madrid gallery.

And in the yielding conquers too
As never foes of heroes do!
For seldom gleams there in the fight,
A dart so exquisitely bright
As beams in Beauty's eye to-night!
Here, in the alcoves that are sweet
To lovers fondly fain to meet,
A lip by tender love unpressed
Sighs softly the divine request.

Here undiscovered of the crowd,
Screened by the mirth and laughter loud,
The hero of my tribute song
For Paola half forgets the throng;
Forsakes the flatterers that crown
His youth, his beauty, his renown:
  For him no lip e'er ministers
So sweet a smile, so soft a sigh
  As that she beautifies with hers
To charm his own to fond reply.

IV.

Sweet, in the stolen interview
Love consecrates to lovers true,
That raptly unmolested kiss
Which braves love's danger for love's bliss!
How tender from each trustful eye
Like sunshine o'er a shadowed sky
Love's smile seems sweeter for its sigh!
Here the heart's passion unreproved
To mystic artifice is moved;—
The hands that erst so strangely cold
Rest fevered in each other's fold;
The lids that shade the eyes delight
As shadows veil the joys of night;
The whispers, none so softly blent
But love interprets their intent;
The kisses fondly fain to still
The bosom they more wildly thrill;

The drapery which deftly steals
Its charm from those which it conceals,
Save that dear bodice which betrays
The bosom it but half arrays,—
All this in sooth and more was known
To twain who lingered long alone
Wrapped in themselves and happier so
Within that palace long ago!

V.

In truth, the hero of my lay
Was moulded from no common clay!
Distant the century and dim
When Time forbears to honour him
The record of whose noble name
Is dear to everlasting fame;
Vandyck! the years that o'er thee pass
View not another such, alas!

What tho' from distant lands he came
  To fair Italia's storied shore,
Art was to them the mutual aim
  That made them kindred evermore.
Him Genoa, unrivalled long,
Enrolled among that patriot throng
Which wept to view Art's sway decline
Within the land it made divine,
Yet with the courage of their race
Restored unto its olden place
If not its governance, its grace.

VI.

Fond was the memory of his home
Where, gilt with sunshine, waters roam
Into the eventides of day
Radiant with exquisite array—

Crimson and purple, and those weird
Dim dreamy shades to him endeared;
But now a land of charms more bright,
Of softer shades, of sweeter light,
Doth charm and captivate his sight;
A land of fuller strains of song,
Of passions fiercer and more strong,
Of mountains loftier than e'er
His fondest dreams had pictured there;
Of calm, sad, ceaseless smiles of sea,
  Of tideless shores and tearless skies
  Wherefrom the sunshine never dies,
But, nursed by Night, sleeps dreamlessly
  Till she, departing, bids him rise;
Sunned by this beauty, it was ne'er
That Antwerp was forgotten there;
Nay, rather, genius found a rest
Entranced by climes so richly blest!

VII.

But richer than the rarest clime
  Or radiant beams above,
Was this—the sweetest gift of time—
  Fair woman's tender love!
Ah, who that ever felt the same
Was e'er content to muse on fame?

Sweet Paola! would this lute of mine
  Partook but faintly of their grace
  That sings of thy fair form and face!
Fain would I image as thy dress
  The fashion of thy hidden charms;
Would with a woven chord confess
The snowy brow, the dusky tress,
  The shapely splendour of thine arms;
Would tell, as haply we divine
By beauty's curves in faint outline,
  The glory of thy loveliness.

VIII.

Fondly she loved, and felt the fate
Of love that loves, alas, too late!
Alack, no unexampled lot
Is thine, O Paola! thou art not
The first sad woman who has found
Love storm the heart already bound.
  Nor yet the last, whose secret tear
Attests the bitter loneliness
  Of love no homestead may endear,
Nor smile betray, nor lip confess,
Nor priest approve, nor Heaven bless!

Yet sweet her love ere love was pain,
Or passion void, or yearning vain;
Ere yet the heart had learnt to still
Those first fond hopes its raptures thrill;

Ere yet that pause, which, worse than all
Those bitter ills it did forestall,
Bade her soul brood, or brood too late
Ere that one cast that seals its fate.

IX.

Oft, like a spectre in a dream,
  Before her mind would pass
That dimmest shade the vivid stream
  Of memory may glass—
The form which all too late we deem
  We never loved, alas!

A sunken eye; a haughty brow!—
Lord Giulio little loves, I trow,
  His lady's loveliness:
And, when the shackles of his vow
  Fetter what fain were freedom now,
  He loves it even less!

Alas, so beautiful a bride
Was never sacrificed to pride,
  To passion, or to power!
His heart, ne'er constant save denied,
Possessing that for which it sighed,
  Grew callous in an hour.

Prithee, of transitory things
Love, saving Gold, hath swiftest wings!
  Lo! this, which never bard hath sung
  In any dead or living tongue,
Seems sooth to him that sings:—
  That never fledgling-love among
  The little doves was e'er *too* young
To utilise those wings!

Yea, more!—'Tis certain-true as truth
Not seldom they fly *best* in youth,
  These tender little doves!

Thus, ere a year Lord Giulio's, sooth!
With more rapidity than ruth,
  Grew weary of its loves.
Full oft she brooded;—less to know
  Her youth of passion as it yearned
  Ignored or negligently spurned,
Than pitying herself whose throw
Of fate thus early wrecked her so!

The hearth that housed the fire's swift lust
As fondly warms its ashen dust:
  The heart that fired love's transient ray
  As fainly kindles love's decay!
Sweet Paola, vain!—the warmth thus lent
Leaves but the heart more swiftly spent!
  Love unreturned droops chill away
  As sunbeam on a winter's day;
Frozen by that for which 'tis blent,
It lingering dies of its own vent!

Thus thro' long days, unsought, uncared,
Her griefs unsoothed, her joys unshared,
Her breast more lonely since it knows
How rapt *might* be its reft repose;
Reaping, alas! as years roll on,
Neglect for what was pride anon,
What marvel—cold to her caress—
She steels her heart and loves him less.

X.

Poor widowed bride! full well, I trow,
  She truthfully could tell,
If Heaven made her marriage-vow,
  The keeping it was hell!
The bridal blossoms on her brow,
  If weeds, were scarce more fell;—
Sooth! never half the widows now
  Are widowed half as well!

Man lives unto himself a God;
  His loves are never wrong!
But woman feels the early rod
  For passions just as strong,
Since never years of virtue win
Indulgence for one moment's sin!

Full oftentimes he came and went;
Or business-bound, or pleasure-bent,
  To distant lands he'd roam:
Unseasonably well content,
The wanderer deemed no day ill spent
  Save that which forced him home.

XI.

Ambassador to distant Spain,
  He cometh not—long due:
Perchance the humours of the main,
  Or labours that accrue

To embassage her lord detain;
  Or the dim dusky hue
And amorous eyes do him constrain
  Of señorita, who
Enthralls him fonder as less fain
  To breathe that word *adieu*,
Till he procrastinates its pain
  For future days to rue:
Or be it this or that, 'twas plain
  He sought not Paola's view.
Regret for such an one were vain
  That, coming, comes untrue;
Seeking her only for the gain
  Of leaving her anew.

XII.

Meanwhile the mellow harvest days
  Grow dearer—swift to disappear
Within that dim and dusky haze
  Which crowns the autumn of the year:
And still the Marquis Giulio stays,
  And still his Paola's heart is dear
To one its every thrill obeys,
  As chords awaken rich and clear
For him that loves the lute he plays!

Full oft their trysts, but none so oft
As each eye craves with pleadings soft.
For every bitter hour apart
Full fonder grows each faithful heart,
Whose severance makes more passing sweet
That moment when again they meet.
  Oft where the surges of the shore
Make plaint unto the listening e'en,
Their love, congenial to the scene,
  Murmured the burden that it bore—

Sad burden of the might-have-been,
  Or hapless nevermore,
With many an interlude between
Where not a grief durst intervene
  To shade the loves they lingered o'er.
And upwards from the dreamy shore,
Where drooping twilight kneels before
  The tribunals of night,
They wander, shadow-screened from view.
There blossoms nurture 'neath the dew
  A beauty yet more bright;
  So love's dear eyes as sweetly bear
A gleam of softer, richer hue
  For every tear that lingers there!
And oft within the olden walls
Of Genoa's patrician halls
  His queen rewards his sight;
Loved recompense for lonely days
That led them each by separate ways
  To mutual delight.

XIII.

I doubt not destinies of life
  Impel us from the things that are :
  All nobler natures hold some star
Divinely blest, which thro' all strife,
Danger, reverses, and despair,
They follow as a goddess fair.
And Love to Paola was the same ;
  Nor knew she till, alas ! too late,
  That 'neath the beacon-light of fate
She woo'd the skeleton of Shame !

Oh for the anguish of it ! Oh !
The bitter of the dregs below
  The love-draughts that we drain !
She was a woman—dost thou know
Of any, sorrowing, tempted so
  That had not thus been fain ?
Impassioned by the lips that should,
'Tis passing easy to be good ;

And such are ever they that yet
Do vaunt a virtue none beset!
A plague upon such womenkind!
  At least on such-like of the band
  As,—soured, unsympathetic, and
Thro' lack of loveliness exempted
From chance of being thuswise tempted,—
  Scorn what they cannot understand!
Small marvel passion, thus divined,
Is fashioned even as defined—
A product less of heart than mind!
I doubt not that the mind suffices
To steel a bosom none entices;
  But woman that has heart at all
  Is good to stumble if not fall
If Love waylay her at a crisis!
  Ah, Woman! couldst thou estimate
That prize, of Heaven begot,
When he to whom is linked thy lot
  Is thine by love as fate,
Heavy thy tears would fall and hot
For such as Paola was, I wot!

XIV.

O, grand! O, beautiful and great
  Doth Genoa appear
That welcomes at the city gate
  Lord Giulio's drawing near.
Ring out, O chimes! he comes again,
The State's ambassador to Spain!
The quaint old byeways of the town
Are many-voiced with his renown:
  Brave banners emulously beat
The happy winds that onward flit:
  Bright wealth of blossom strews the street
Where throng the crowd that fain, like it,
  Would die to kiss the hero's feet!
Ah, why, when every eye is lit,
  Doth Paolo's gaze so mutely yearn?
Say, wherefore is her sigh so sad
When every lip save hers is glad
  To hail her lord's return?

XV.

Lo! when the cheers that greet his name,
  His noble manliness of mien,
His haught achievement and his fame
Cease e'en as sudden as they came—
  Breathless within that silenced scene,
Applause more loudly rends the air
Than ever hailed Lord Giulio there.
Vandyck! Vandyck! the cry resounds
Surged as a wave that bursts its bounds;
  Till falls, as in expectancy,
A hush monotonously like
  The quenching rain that stills the sea;
  The whilst men whisper, "Where is he?
Since all are here, why bides Vandyck?
Prithee, good masters; marry! friends,
This humour something strange portends!
  Yon herald calls! and gramercie!
His grace the Doge and all the State
Commands the cavalcade to wait!

But, masters! borne upon the crowd,
  Behold he comes!" Then ceaselessly
Their plaudits echo long and loud—
  "Vandyck! the State would honour thee!"

Then, when the heralds sound his name,
He lists the mandate they proclaim:—
  His hand is chosen to portray,
  Commemorative of that day,
His own, the State's, and Giulio's fame.
  He starts! The red blood mounts his cheek,
Then pales, as if for very shame
  To know itself so passing weak;
A shudder thrills him to the heart;
His smile grows chill, for all its art;
  And dim his eye, so lately bright,
Save now and then it wakes to dart
  Gleams such as only scorn can light:
  For lo! full straightway to his sight
That being stands whom, urged by fate
And love—by him made desolate,—
He loathes with everlasting hate!

XVI.

But now, O tenderly intent,
His Paola's eyes on his are bent!
  Yet in that long, that piteous gaze,
What agonies of soul are blent!
  The buried joys of other days,
Whose shades, arising, dim each eye;
The yearning hopes of years gone by
  Which this sad hour, alas! betrays;—
All these within that gaze are pent,
Yea, life itself in languishment,
Its radiance shadowed and its raptures spent!

But whilst she looks, he lists anew,
But scarce believes his hearing true:
The State demands her portrait too!
  He sighs, that deems it ne'er for him
The blissful fortune to portray—
  That eye which shames its own dusk rim,

Now dreamy in its depths and dim,
Now lit as lakes which moonbeams brim,
Pure as that same celestial ray:
That cherished smile, those charms divine,
Thrice blest, sweet Paola, being thine!
He scarce believes, and yet forsooth
What fain he would is his in truth;
With hers the Senate links his name,
And, viewing her, Time vaunts his fame.*

XVII.

What tho' the years are deep and dim
That veil the painter's long repose,
'Tis thine as mine to image him
Depicting, as he fondly knows,

* These portraits of the Marquis and Marchioness Brignole-Sale are to this day in the Palazzo Rosso. This palace, with all its art treasures, was recently presented to the city of Genoa by that munificent princess, the Duchess of Galliera—the last lineal descendant and heiress of the elder branch of the illustrious house of Brignole-Sale.

Each snowy charm, each shapely limb,
  And that dear smile that on him glows.
How sweet, when eve had stol'n away
Light from the love-laborious day,
To watch the crimson splendours glide
On ebbing waves of eventide ;
Now rippling to a golden crest,
Now rapt in yet more radiant rest !
As beams the sunset in the skies,
So passion gleams in Paola's eyes ;
As all the world save this is dim,
So all is drear save love to him.
What painter lives who would not lay
Aside his rôle for such a ray ?
The master yields to Paola's sighs :
Here leans his easel, and there lies
The palette, with its flush of dyes ;
And there, in undisguised neglect,
Unfinished even as undecked,
The canvas whereon circumspect

Gleams Paola's face, tho' Paola's form
Seems rather draped for sun than storm :
He leaves them, for the eve is sweet,
And, birdlike, poising in mid-flight,
  The twilight lingers ere it goes ;
  Since Nature, sympathetic, knows
To curtain her full flush of light
When dying day is nursed by night.
Constrained, he tarries at her feet ;
Their sighs commingle, their lips meet,
And all save passion is complete.
  Yea, by that pallor of her cheek ;
  Her bosom's surge, now strong, now weak ;
  By those caressing lips whose sighs
Breathe longing on the lips they greet ;
By these and all things sad and sweet,
Alas for love that's incomplete !
  Yet ever and anon her eyes
With depths of gentle light essay
To feign a calm their tears betray.

Thus oft in twilight's tender hour
'Twas his to feel their witching power ;
So sweetly lone, so softly lit,
They gleamed like early stars on it.
Nay ! but no heaven of the skies
Hath sweeter beam than woman's eyes ;
Nor either realm a blight or bliss
Like that we curse or bless in this,
Led by the light that in them lies !

XVIII.

"Fly with me, Paola !" oft he sighs :
A nobler soul than his would ne'er
Have reft her heart with such a prayer ;
Too generous to crave the prize
At reputation's sacrifice :
Yet sooth, what breast could yield content,
Blossom of love so rarely blent !

1.

"Ah! fly with me, sweetest! where none shall deny
The bloom of love's passion, the balm of love's sigh;
Where no desolate winter can tarnish with tears
The blossom of love which love's summer endears!

2.

"Thus sunned, e'en life's anguish shall ever be bright,
As sweet with the day is the sweetness of night;
For the joys which true passions have tenderly lit
Are the joys which in sorrow shine sweeter for it!

3.

"Then fly with me, dearest! ah, do not deny
The fond sighs of thy lip, the fair gleams of thine eye?
What boots thee thy palace when love shall have sped,
Or the garden of love when love's garlands are dead?"

Tho' hope was fond, and passion strong,
And tears were weak that ever wept,
Gleaming like dewdrops as she slept,
Pendant upon those lashes long;
Or was it freak, or was it fate?—
Her heart, with all the love it bore,
Alone was his, and nothing more.
Yet even thus, how desolate!
What tho' her spotlessness of fame
Was sullied by no deed of shame;

What tho' her station, lineage, place,
Were never dimmed by love's disgrace—
Bartered for one swift moment's bliss—
Yet oft the heart, more worn by this
Stern conflict with the passion there,
Droops unconsoled in swift despair!

XIX.

One night, black as the treacherous deed,
Or rancour, malice, hate, or greed,
Traducingly to Giulio told
A tale that made his blood run cold.
His passion quivers as a bough
That knows not rude repulse till now;
And, like that gust by storms begot,
His breath is short and swift and hot;
A glimmering madness lights his eye
So fierce, that had his spouse been by,

His falchion's kindred flame beneath,
Within her breast had found its sheath!
Nor love nor sorrow, lust nor shame,
Convulses thus his stalwart frame;
Nay, but he feels, nigh past control,
The envies of his little soul.
He knows not when, he cares not how,
His hand from off the master's brow
Shall wrench the wreath that rims it now.
Ah! never tear so dear, so sweet,
  From any human eye could flow,
  As that which Paola's eyes shall know,
  To see her lover lying low—
Love-desolated—at her feet!

XX.

Gloomily from the eastern skies
The first faint rays of dawn arise;
Gloomily from Albaro's * glades,
Roused night recalls her slumbrous shades;
Gloomily over vale and hill
The midnight mists are lingering still,
And cold the wintry winds and keen
That moan amid that silent scene!
Hark! hearest thou that sudden sound—
The hoof of courser on the ground?
Lo! seest thou, passing yonder tree,
A horseman, riding recklessly,
As one that fears no further woe
Than that which drives him onward so?

* *Albaro.* Notable, also, as the residence of Byron and the Countess Guiccioli in 1822–3. "At Genoa he inhabited the villa Saluzzo at Albaro, one of the suburbs of that city, where he continued to live till the July of 1823, when he set sail for Greece, where in a few months his existence terminated."—Howitt's *Homes and Haunts of the British Poets.*

He nears! Ah, ne'er was human face
More featured for that gloomy place.
His cloak is stained; his cheek is seared;
His brow is knit; his eye is bleared;
His hand droops, nerveless to restrain,
That scarcely grasps his charger's rein;
His dim dull eye nor cares to heed
The quickened paces of his steed,
Nor marks the steep and heavy ground
It breasts with mad impetuous bound,
Nor how the white foam flakes its chest,
Which onward nobly strains distressed.
'Tis Giulio! but oh, wherefore, say,
Comes he thus dight ere break of day?
Good saints! the mood, the scene, the time,
Bespeak some dread, some secret crime!
See! suddenly he nerves his hand
And brings his courser to a stand;
Turns, peers intently whence he came,
And loudly calls some comrade's name;

Unwinds the bugle at his side,
And wakes a blast that echoes wide,
Till, in the growing dawn of day,
A horseman wends that selfsame way,
Nor heeds, amid the shadows dim,
Two others mutely following him.
Scaling the summit of the hill,
Impatiently he waits until
  They tardily appear.

Yon last, whose features calm and still,
Whose wondrous eyes no shades can chill,
  So deep their depths and clear,
Is he for whom sweet Paola's gaze
So brightly beamed in happier days.

Not long ere all dismounted stand;
  Not long ere Giulio and Vandyck
Confront each other, sword in hand,
  To feint, to parry, and to strike.

Brave fence was there of might and will,
Prowess of heart and hand and skill;
In sooth, 'twere difficult to say
Which sword more deftly led the fray.
At length, as bloodlessly they waged,
Lord Giulio's choler, thrice enraged
To be thus tardily assuaged,
Urged him impatiently to close
On stealthy feints and subtler blows.
More swiftly than it takes to tell,
He raised his gleaming brand in air,
Rebounded, groaned, then staggering fell,
Mute, save for that fixed stony glare
That spoke his vanquished soul's despair!

* * * * *

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XXI.

Swift years have sped—as years will pass
That bear us from love's youth, alas!
Ah! who can tell the agony,
Sweet Paola! that they brought to thee?—
Tears of irreparable grief
That nevermore may know relief;
Longings that love did sweetly wake
And cherish only to forsake;
Years that beheld thy cheek grow pale,
And e'en thy heart of fondness fail;
Thy fair form's too untimely stoop
Drooped as the sunless garlands droop.
Not long, alas! hadst thou to wait
Ere Death took pity on thy fate;
Not long, ere blossoms pure as thou
  Upon thine unmolested tomb
  Image thy beauty in their bloom,
Sweet as the sleep that soothes thee now!

XXII.

And Giulio, scarce from death reclaimed,
Survives to mourn the wife he shamed ;
Survives, to sorrow all too late
For Vandyck banished from the State.*
Sooth ! even swifter than the years,
Wells the full fountain of his tears
When, in the cloister's solitude,
Remorse arouses him to brood.
Ofttimes his penitential prayer
Arose by night for Paola there ;
And even when the dawn flushed fair
To herald the sad night's release,
Scarce did his heart's lone burden cease : †
" God rest her gentle soul in peace ! "

* Vandyck left Genoa suddenly in the year 1626, supposed to have been secretly banished, on account of the duel, through the influence of his wounded rival.

† The Marquis Anton Giulio Brignole-Sale survived his wife many years, celebrated for his zeal as preacher and writer. He died about the year 1660, aged 61.

XXIII.

Oft to the weary heart that yearns,
Love, imaged in a dream, returns;
The same dear form that erst we knew,
Restored to visionary view,
Controls, entrances, and delights
The stilly watches of the nights;
The same lit eyes that sweetly shone
Seem ours again to gaze upon;
The same fond bosom we have prest
As passionately thrills our breast;
Yea, even the same tones we hear,
The selfsame accents soft and clear
As memory treasures year by year.

XXIV.

It well may be, Vandyck! that thou
Dost image this, howbeit now
Proud Ruthven's daughter, thy fair bride,
Doth softly slumber by thy side.*
Ah! dost thou, pillowed on her breast,
Dream how thine own was fonder prest
To a dear heart now cold and chill
Which never more to thine shall thrill!

* "*Proud Ruthven's daughter.*" "The king and the artist's friends came to the conclusion that a good marriage would be the best thing to steady his purposes and introduce him to a more equable existence. The influence of Charles arranged a suitable match."—Head's "Life of Vandyck." The lady thus chosen was the beautiful Maria Ruthven, granddaughter of William, fourth Lord Ruthven and first Earl of Gowrie—a lady then in the household of Queen Henrietta. On the 1st of December, 1641, eight days before the painter's death, Justiniana, the sole child of this marriage, was born. Lady Vandyck married secondly Sir Richard Pryse of Gogerddan, Bart. Justiniana married Sir John Stepney, third Baronet of Prendergast, and was grandmother of George Stepney, the poet.

God help all such as image so
The dead delights of long ago;
And woo them gently from the joy
His day awakens to destroy!
It may be that the master's heart
Finds solace as the years depart:—
Sorrow of love finds sweet release
That sighs, "Mine Own! thy labours cease;
God rests thy gentle soul in peace!"

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OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

It was not necessary for this book to be produced, as it has been, with an elegance of type and binding—remarkable even in this age of costly publication—for it to achieve success. It possesses greater merits far than those of mere quaint typography and artistic covering. These detract rather than enhance its merit, for perhaps not a few will be led to think that the contents are the least important part of the work. Indeed, the "sunflower" upon the binding is rather alarming. That glorious flower, so loved by great artists, and especially by one of the greatest England has produced—Mulready—has of late, as the emblem of an objectionable and morbid band of poetasters, been rendered only too ridiculous; and many will confess that a certain misgiving has crept over them when first they saw this book, not but that it is really both quaint and elegant, but there has come over the majority a wholesome feeling, akin to absolute terror, at the mere sight of anything approaching æstheticism. Fortunately, however, Mr Gilbart-Smith's poetry is manly and unaffected, and in no way even faintly suggestive of the unpleasant nonentities to which we have been but too much accustomed. Without making any boastful assertion of

his attachment to Christianity, this New Poet is to be immediately congratulated upon the profoundly religious tone of his work. His reverence for God and Christ and for the forms and morality of Christianity are not unnecessarily prominent; but, as did the great poets of old, whenever it is natural for him to mention directly the Deity, or to allude only to Him, Mr. Gilbart-Smith does so with sincere reverence. This is, indeed, a great quality just now, when our poets either glory in their æsthetical sentimentality or injure religion by rendering her ridiculous by their patronising airs and weak affectations. Admirably conceived, worthy even of the author of the "Rape of the Lock," is the charming satire "Beauty at a Dinner Party" (p. 12 quoted). One of the early poems in the book, entitled "Weary," is of high merit. It contains some noteworthy lines. The following, for instance (p. 6 quoted). Two poems, one to "Toledo" and the other to "Cadix," remind, without suggesting any trace of imitation, the reader of Lord Byron. The interior of the magnificent Cathedral at Toledo is thus beautifully described (pp. 91, 92, and 93 quoted).—*Morning Post* (*2nd notice*).

. . . the paper, the type, the covers, are all quaint; the poems are described as "satirical, philosophical, and Arcadian;" and such a description is a little quaint. Quaint, again, is the author's fancy for dedicating his work to a fair lady whom he has never yet seen, or at any rate known, but upon whom he confidently counts to come forward at the proper time, accept his hand and heart (together with all the worldly goods with which he may be able to endow her), and supply him with subjects for the employment of his riper muse. What he will do, when she appears upon the scene, with the other lady from whom he steals kisses in the very first poem, it is painful to contemplate; but one may hope that there will be no action for breach of promise.

The sentiments are sometimes illumined by a flash of bright and surpassing fancy; there is something satirical, something philosophical, something Arcadian in them: they are not much, if at all, inferior to the early productions of many distinguished poets, and there is no saying to what height the author may attain, when the lady who is to inspire his more mature lays reveals herself and begins her duties. Under her fostering care he may become more famous, in his respective branches of composition, than Juvenal, Lucretius, and Theocritus, or to come nearer home, than Thomas Moore, on whose lines, rather than on those of any ancient classic, one would imagine that he must be fashioned.—*Illustrated London News.*

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We should like our poetry-loving readers to get this volume of poems, for it will well repay an attentive perusal. The paper and binding are exquisite, and make it a nice ornament for a drawing-room table. We understand that the author contemplates the publication of another volume. If that be so it will be no doubt anxiously looked for, if it be any way as meritable as "My Ladye."—*Richmond and Ripon Chronicle.*

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Another poem on "Sympathy," illustrative of an extract from Euripides, "The man who melts with social sympathy, tho' not allied, is than a thousand kinsmen of more worth," we give at full length (pp. 109 and 108).

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